

New Frontiers

A newsletter for ★ educators

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS AT THE JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Breaking Gender Barriers: A Female Space Trainee Advocates for Women in Space



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM.

Geraldyn "Jerrie" Cobb, one of thirteen women who successfully completed a privately-funded astronaut training program in the early 1960s, urged President Kennedy to launch a woman into space.

Twenty years before Sally Ride became the first US female astronaut to launch into space, aviator Geraldyn "Jerrie" Cobb and twelve other female space trainees attempted to break the gender barrier in space exploration. Elementary and secondary school students can analyze a letter from Cobb to President Kennedy urging him to allow women astronauts to move the US ahead in the "Race for Space" with the Soviet Union. Read the suggested article for further background information, then use the National Archives and Record Administration's (NARA) document analysis worksheet for an engaging activity on the role gender played in the space program during the Kennedy administration.

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Kennedy Library Resources for National History Day

As students search for topics and resources for this year's National History Day (NHD) theme, *Breaking Barriers in History*, they might find a compelling topic that captures their interest and propels their investigation of primary sources by delving into the Library's vast Archives. A few suggested resources are presented here.

The Berlin Wall: Impeding the Flow of Refugees

At the end of World War II, the US, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, divided Germany into two zones. The Soviet Union occupied East Germany and installed a rigidly controlled communist state. The other three Allies shared the occupation of West Germany and helped rebuild the country as a capitalist democracy. The city of Berlin, located 200 miles inside East Germany, was also divided. Half of the city—West Berlin—was part of West Germany.

On August 13, 1961, East Germany began constructing a barrier to prevent the exodus of East German refugees travelling to West Berlin. A striking symbol of the Iron Curtain, the Berlin Wall remained a barrier between East and West Berlin for 28 years, coming down in November 1989. The Kennedy Library has many resources discussing the US and West German responses to the building of the wall, and a section of the wall is on display in our Museum galleries.

The brief online essay "The Cold War in Berlin" with its embedded video of Kennedy's famous "Ich Bin Ein Berliner" speech from June 26, 1963 is a good place for students to begin their research on this topic. In the speech, Kennedy said, "Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect, but we have

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A 12-foot tall and 4-foot wide section of the Berlin Wall covered with brightly colored graffiti is on display in the Kennedy Library's Legacy Gallery.

HIGHLIGHTS

4 Analyzing an Advocacy Letter

6 Profile in Courage Essay Contest

7 Apollo 11 Anniversary Programs

8 Upcoming Kennedy Library Forums

Kennedy Library Resources for National History Day, *continued*

never had to put a wall up to keep our people in, to prevent them from leaving us.” (jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/the-cold-war-in-berlin)

A number of the Library’s digitized oral histories include statements about the Kennedy Administration’s initial reaction to the wall. In his March 13, 1970 oral history, Secretary of State Dean Rusk discussed the West Germans’ shock at the building of the wall and the Kennedy Administration’s decision to take no military action against it (pp. 173-177, jfklibrary.org/sites/default/files/archives/JFKOH/Rusk%20David%20Dean/JFKOH-DDR-04/JFKOH-DDR-04-TR.pdf).

Additional primary source documents related to Berlin just before and after the wall was constructed can be found in a folder in the President’s Office Files (<https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKPOF/117/JFKPOF-117-007>), including President Kennedy’s August 18, 1961 letter to Vice President Johnson who was being sent to Berlin to boost West German morale. “The main purpose of your mission is to reassure the people of West Berlin,” Kennedy wrote, “while at the same time talking frankly with [West Berlin] Mayor Brandt.” The folder also includes President Kennedy’s correspondence with Mayor Willy Brandt and Chancellor of West Germany Konrad Adenauer.

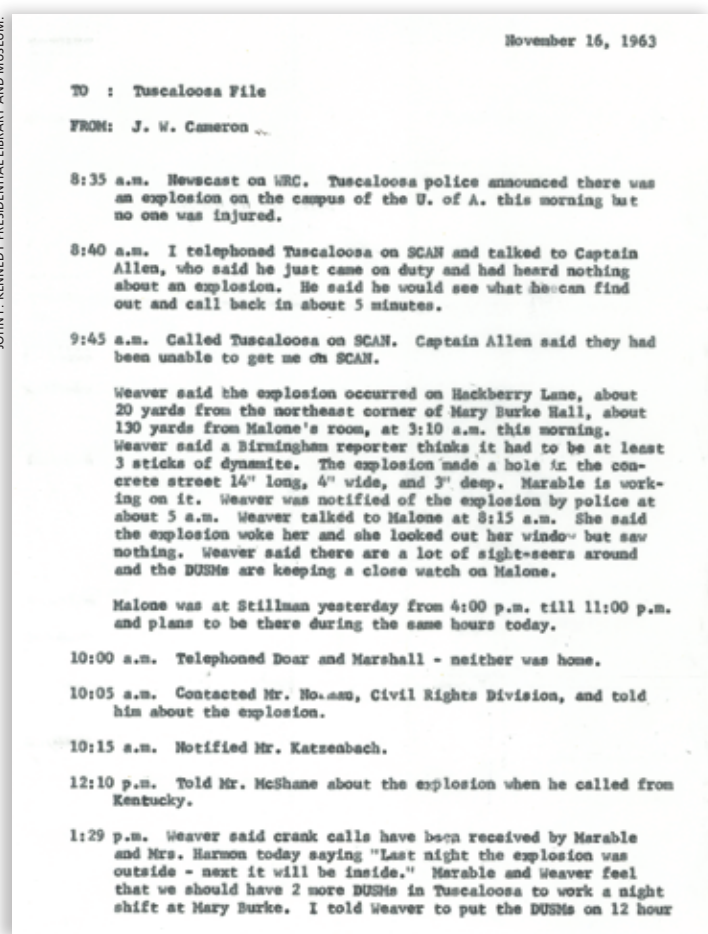
Vivian Malone and the Integration of the University of Alabama

Another topic students may want to explore is Vivian Malone’s experience registering and attending the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. On June 11, 1963, Governor Wallace stood at the doorway of Foster Auditorium at the University to prevent her and another African American college student, James Hood, from registering for classes.

Students can begin by reading Ms. Malone Jones’ account of this event, as she described her experiences in a 40th anniversary *Kennedy Library Forum* (jfklibrary.org/events-and-awards/forums/2003-11-17-integrating-the-university-of-alabama). She stated, “And I just felt like, ‘You just have to do what you have to do. You just can’t sit back and let people tell you, over and over again, ‘You’re not good enough.’ I scored in the 99th percentile; I had a 3.8 average. So why shouldn’t I have gone? I just wasn’t ready to back down... no one has the right to tell you you can’t go to your state school.”

Students can also view the *Universal Newsreel* footage of the events at the University on June 11, 1963

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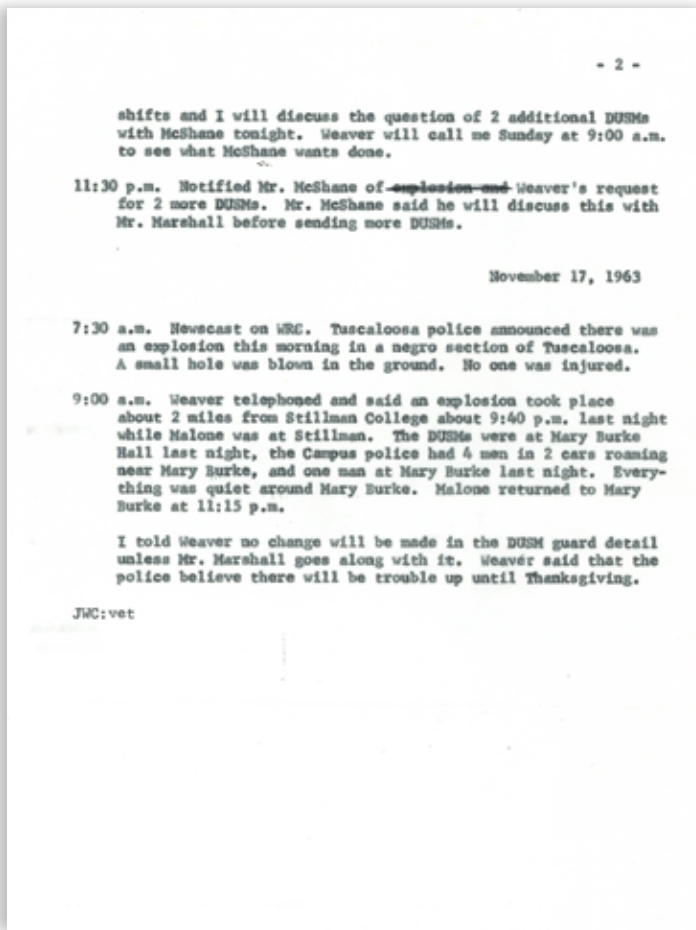


Vivian Malone: Tuscaloosa Target, November 16, 1963.

J. W. Cameron reports that a bomb exploded near Vivian Malone’s dormitory at the University of Alabama.

(jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/media-galleries/universal-newsreels-1963). A US government-sponsored documentary film created in 1963 (*The Five Cities of June, 1963*) includes additional footage of Malone at the University. The film clip provides students with a period point of view. The section of the video regarding the integration of the University begins at 13:59 and ends at 17:54 (jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/USG/USG-01-15/USG-01-15).

Many letters, telegrams, video clips and other primary sources about this event, curated from the Library’s Archives, are featured in the “Integration of the University of Alabama” section of the microsite *1963: The Struggle for Civil Rights* (civilrights.jfklibrary.org/media-assets/the-university-of-alabama.html#On-the-Way-to-School). One document, for example, mentions a bombing that occurred in the middle of the night during November 1963 about 130 yards from Ms. Malone’s dorm room, and provides a sense of the immediacy of the story.



Louis E. Martin: Breaking Barriers in Federal Government Appointments

Though not widely known, Louis Martin worked behind-the-scenes to bring more African Americans into politics in the 1960s. Martin, who began his professional career as a journalist, became an adviser to three presidents, and helped increase the number of African Americans in government.

Students can begin their research by reading Martin's oral history. The Library has digitized transcripts of three interviews, completed on March 14, April 7, and May 11, 1966. During his May 11th session, he discussed his involvement in providing the Kennedy Administration with African American candidates for government leadership positions saying, "I don't give a darn what the job was, I came up with a Negro" (p. 86, jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKOH/Martin%2C%20Louis%20E/JFKOH-LEM-03/JFKOH-LEM-03).

The Kennedy Library Archives includes several documents illustrating the kind of power Martin wielded. A memo from Martin to President Kennedy's assistant, Kenneth



President Kennedy and Louis Martin (far right) with Augustus "Gus" Hawkins, a Congressional candidate from California who became the first African American elected to Congress from the state, in the White House Oval Office, August 22, 1962.

O'Donnell, shows how he could be instrumental in setting up important meetings between the president and African American leaders.

jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHCSF/0360/JFKWHCSF-0360-001?image_identifier=JFKWHCSF-0360-001-p0009

Martin was influential in his position as Deputy Chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in the early 1960s. Students' research may include a review of his reports to DNC Chairman John Bailey. In his weekly report dated November 1, 1963, for example, Martin describes meeting with Martin Luther King Jr, high-ranking officials in the Peace Corps, and the assistant to the mayor of New York City, among others.

jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKPOF/140/JFKPOF-140-022

These are just a sampling of the vast resources available to your students. We recommend that students begin by visiting the web page "The Basics of Archival Research" (jfklibrary.org/archives/search-collections/basics-of-archival-research) and browsing subject headings to find primary source materials on various topics: jfklibrary.org/archives/search-collections/browse-subject-headings.

Another valuable resource are the numerous press conferences on a variety of topics that President Kennedy gave throughout his three years in office. They may be found along with transcripts at jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-press-conferences. ★

LESSON PLAN ★ Elementary and Secondary Students

Breaking Gender Barriers: A Female Space Trainee Advocates for Women in Space,

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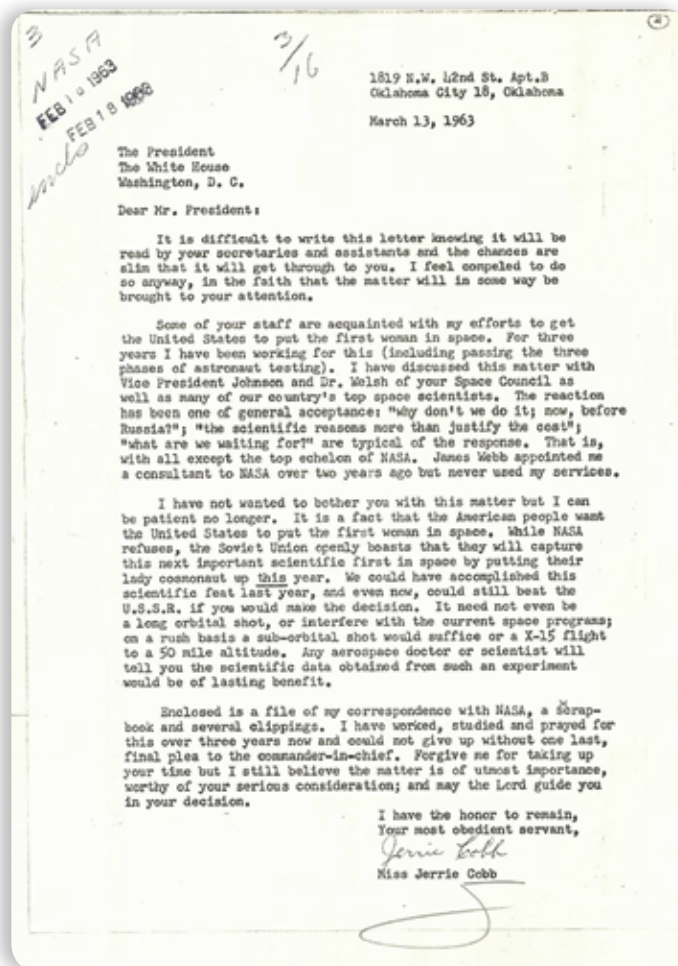
Background Information

In response to the Soviet Union's achievements in space exploration, President Kennedy set an ambitious goal:

he challenged the United States to land a "man on the moon" before the end of the decade. With generous funding and a national commitment, NASA moved full-throttle ahead to make Kennedy's vision a reality. Along with intensive technological development, recruiting and training astronauts was an essential part of the effort.

The first class of astronauts were selected from a pool of about 500 naval aviators as NASA chose to recruit candidates who had served as military test pilots. Since women had been banned from serving as pilots in the military since 1944, they were excluded from the pool of candidates. There were, however, a group of women who successfully completed astronaut training – but not at NASA.

Dr. Richard Lovelace, a medical doctor who had conducted the physical testing for NASA in the selection of the first group of astronauts, recruited thirteen female aviators for a privately-funded program that applied the same physical, psychological, and technical tests that male astronaut candidates endured.



Letter from Jerrie Cobb to President John F. Kennedy regarding women in the space program, March 13, 1963.

One of these trainees, Geraldyn "Jerrie" Cobb, sent President Kennedy two telegrams in the summer of 1962 requesting to meet with him to discuss putting the first woman in space.

Her request was denied. Deeply concerned that the United States would miss yet another chance to move ahead of the Soviet Union, she wrote again in March 1963: "I have not wanted to bother you with this matter but I can be patient no longer. It is a fact that the American people want the United States to put the first woman in space."

Her lobbying didn't convince the government, and Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova would be the first woman in space three months later.

Analyzing the Evidence

March 13, 1963 Letter from Jerrie Cobb to President Kennedy

Have students complete the National Archives *Analyze a Written Document* worksheet (download at [archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written_](https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet_novice.pdf)

[document_analysis_worksheet_novice.pdf](https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet_novice.pdf)) in preparation for a small or large group discussion. See the *Teachers' Guide to the Document* for suggested responses to the worksheet questions.

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For further information

- ★ Blog post, "[Patient No Longer: Fighting for Representation in the Space Race](#)" by Emily Mathay and Stacey Flores Chandler, Textual Archives Reference, a blog post from *The JFK Library Archives Blog, An Inside Look*. Access the complete blog post with additional documents and photographs at jfk.blogs.archives.gov/2019/06/12/representation-in-the-space-race/
- ★ For an excellent middle grade book on the female space trainees, see [Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream](#) by Tanya Lee Stone, Candlestick Press, 2009. ★

- For elementary students: Students can focus on the first and second paragraph of the letter when analyzing the text.
- For secondary students: Explore the entire document with the NARA worksheet. Additional responses for secondary students are indicated below.

Teachers' Guide to the NARA Worksheet

Meet the document

- The letter is typed with a handwritten signature.
- There are special markings at the top of the document.
 - The handwritten "NASA" indicates White House staff sent the original letter to NASA. The White House kept a copy of the letter which is now in the Kennedy Library collections.
 - "encl" stands for enclosures which appear to have also been sent to NASA. The Kennedy Library archives does not have copies of the enclosures.
 - There are two date stamps that appear to show FEB 18 1963. The date stamp usually indicates when a letter is sent to another agency (here it would be NASA). Why are there two dates? Perhaps the first did not print clearly so it was stamped again. Why is it stamped February and not March when the letter appears to have been written? Perhaps the date stamp was wrong. There are no definitive answers to these questions.
 - 3/16 is a date written by someone in the mail room, and it usually indicates the day they replied, routed, or otherwise handled the letter.

Observe its parts

- Miss Jerrie Cobb wrote the document.
- The White House received the document. It was written to President Kennedy. It does not indicate the name of the person who received or read the document. The date stamps show it was received and sent to NASA.
- The letter is dated March 13, 1963 (see discussion of the date stamps in the "Meet the Document" section.)

Try to make sense of it

- The main idea of the letter is to convey the importance of the United States being the first country to put a woman in space and gain the benefits from that accomplishment.
- Two possible quotes that support this are:
 - "Some of your staff are acquainted with my efforts to

get the United States to put the first woman in space. For three years I have been working for this."

- "It is a fact that the American people want the United States to put the first woman in space."
- The letter was written because the writer "can be patient no longer." She feels strongly that the US should move forward with putting a woman in space before the Soviet Union. She has received positive responses from the vice president and top scientists and is frustrated because NASA has refused to support the idea. She is appealing to President Kennedy to advance this effort.

Additional discussion questions with suggested responses:

- What does the letter reveal about the author? (*It was sent by Miss Jerrie Cobb from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Cobb has completed astronaut training. Check to see if any students have prior knowledge about her.*)

Additional responses for older students: She underwent astronaut training. She has been working to put a woman in space for three years. She has met with Vice President Johnson and Dr. Welsh. She is a consultant for NASA but James Webb has not used her services.)

- How would you describe the tone? (*Urgent, passionate, concerned, frustrated*)
- What does the document reveal about women in space? Were there female astronauts? (*There were women who were training as astronauts.*)

Additional responses for older students: According to Cobb, NASA refused to put women in space. Cobb is frustrated because she is qualified and is not being allowed to serve

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Analyze a Written Document *We the People*

Meet the document.

Are there any special markings on the document? Circle all that apply.

Is it handwritten or typed?

Write down any words that you don't know. Then look up the definitions.

Who wrote this document?

Who read or received this document?

Observe its parts.

What is the date of the document?

Try to make sense of it.

What is the main idea of the document?

List two quotes (words from the document) that help support the main idea.

Why do you think this document was written?

Use it as historical evidence.

Where do you think you could find out more information about the persons who wrote or received this document?

Where do you think you could find out more information about this event?

Worksheet created by the National Archives and Records Administration and is in the public domain.

Download and print this worksheet at [archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet_novice.pdf](https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet_novice.pdf).

LESSON PLAN ★ Elementary and Secondary Students

Breaking Gender Barriers: A Female Space Trainee Advocates for Women in Space,

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as an astronaut. Have students find specific language in the text to support their response about Cobb's tone.

- Do you think there is a response to the letter? If so, who might have written it and what might it have said? *Student opinions with reasons.*

Note: There is no record of a response from President Kennedy or White House staff. Cobb had sent two previous telegrams to Kennedy in July and August 1962 which were forwarded to James Webb, the administrator of NASA. His response, dated August 20, 1962, explained that NASA would not be allowing women into the astronaut program.

- What else would you like to know about the document or the subject of the letter? How might you find the answers to your questions?

Follow-up suggestions:

Share historical information from the introduction article to let students know that a group of women were in training to be astronauts but not by the US government. The US launched a woman into space – Dr. Sally Ride in 1983 – more than twenty years after Cobb's telegrams were sent.

Show students the photograph of Jerrie Cobb and either share biographical information or have them research her and the other women who had been training for space exploration.

Discuss the 1962 letter from James E. Webb, Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and how that might have affected Cobb's 1963 letter. The letter and Cobb's telegrams can be accessed at: jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHC/NF/0515/JFKWHC/NF-0515-002?image_identifier=JFKWHC/NF-0515-002-p0046. ★

2019 Profile in Courage Essay Contest Winner Recounts Conflict Over Refugees Fleeing Nazi Germany

Elazar Cramer, a senior at the Maimonides School in Brookline, Massachusetts, won the national 2019 John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Essay Contest for High School Students. Cramer's winning essay describes the political courage of Edith Nourse Rogers, a Republican US Representative from Massachusetts who believed it was imperative for the United States to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Nazi Germany. She defied powerful anti-immigrant groups, prevailing public opinion, and the US government's isolationist policies to propose legislation which would increase the number of German-Jewish refugee children allowed to enter the United States.

Cramer was honored at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum on May 19, 2019, and received a \$10,000 scholarship award. His nominating teacher, Mr. Christopher Dore, received a John F. Kennedy Public Service Grant in the amount of \$500 to be used for school projects that encourage student leadership and civic engagement.

The annual Profile in Courage Essay Contest invites high school students from across the nation to write an essay on an act of political courage by a US elected official. The Contest is a companion program of the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award™, named for Kennedy's Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Profiles in Courage*, which recounts the stories of eight US Senators who risked their careers, incurring the wrath of constituents or powerful interest



2019 winner Elazar Cramer and his nominating teacher Christopher Dore join Martha Minow, chair of the Profile in Courage Award committee, for a luncheon discussion, May 19, 2019.

groups, by taking principled stands for unpopular positions. This year, 2,515 essays were submitted from students in fifty states, Washington, DC; Guam, and from US citizens in Canada, India and South Korea.

The 2020 Profile in Courage Essay Contest is open for submissions. The Contest deadline is January 17, 2020. To access Contest information, past winning essays, related standards, and curriculum materials, visit jfklibrary.org/EssayContest.

The Essay Contest is sponsored by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation and generously supported by John Hancock. ★



In Case You Missed It...

July 20th marked the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing. In honor of this human milestone fulfilling President Kennedy's challenge to the nation to land a man on the Moon and return him safely to Earth by the end of the decade, the Kennedy Library offered special programming focusing on US space exploration from the late 1960s to today.



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PHOTO BY TOM FITZSIMMONS.

(Left to right) **Ellen Stofan** moderated a discussion with **Michael Collins**, **Ellen Ochoa**, **Charles Bolden**, and **Dava Newman** at the *Kennedy Library Forum* on June 19, 2019.

Kennedy Library Forum

NASA: From the Moon to Mars and Beyond

On June 19, 2019, *Apollo 11* Lunar Command Module pilot **Michael Collins**, former NASA administrator **Charles Bolden**, former director of the Johnson Space Center **Ellen Ochoa**, and former NASA deputy administrator **Dava Newman** discussed NASA's past, present, and future with National Air and Space Museum director **Ellen Stofan**. This program was supported in part by Raytheon Company and Draper.

The JFK Space Summit, a full-day of panels and programming, was built around this Forum recognizing President Kennedy's vision. Hosted by the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, with **Ambassador Caroline Kennedy**, this symposium highlighted the efforts that led to the first Moon landing, current scientific and technological space initiatives, and the future of space exploration in order to learn from the past, draw inspiration from President Kennedy's vision, and renew civic commitment to solving today's great challenges.

Watch panel discussions at jfklibrary.org/watch-the-jfk-space-summit. ★

We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win... ”

—President John F. Kennedy,
Address at Rice University
September 12, 1962

JFK Space Fest 2019: The Eagle Has Landed

About 3,700 visitors attended a special commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the *Apollo 11* Moon landing on Saturday, July 20, 2019. The day included guest speaker presentations, interactive activities, make-and-take space crafts, digital engagement tools, and presentations on space in the Museum galleries for visitors of all ages.

Throughout the day, visitors attended the sessions to learn from leaders in the fields of science and technology. Inspire your students with a class viewing of special speakers at jfklibrary.org/PastForums. ★



Dr. Franklin Chang Diaz, founder and CEO of the Ad Astra Rocket Company and author of *Dream's Journey* and *To Mars and Beyond, FAST!*, discussed his research and career, including 25 years' service as a NASA astronaut and a veteran of seven space shuttle flights.



Former NASA astronaut **Daniel Burbank**, currently Senior Technical Fellow for Mission Systems at Collins Aerospace Systems, discussed his experience of more than two decades at NASA, including his time aboard the International Space Station.



NASA Engineer **Su Curley**, who works on crew survival spacesuits and hardware for the Orion Program, including the journey to Mars, discussed current spacesuit technology and demonstrated how suits are used for spacewalking to visitors.




Dr. Lonnie Johnson, founder of the Johnson Research and Development Co., Inc, and holder of over 100 patents, discussed his career in invention – from NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab to inventing the Super Soaker®, the top-selling water toy in history – and inspired attendees.

Columbia Point
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Department of Education and
Public Programs offers free
Museum passes to teachers
considering a field trip to the
Library. Please call 617.514.1600.*

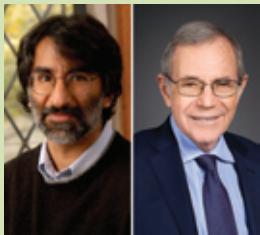
Museum Hours

Daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 
Closed Thanksgiving,
Christmas, and New Year's Day

Upcoming Kennedy Library Forum

If you would like to attend an upcoming Forum, email educationjfk@nara.gov to request reserved seats for you and your students, when available.

The Constitution: Changes and Challenges in US History Tuesday, December 10 ★ 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.



Akhil Amar, professor of law and political science at Yale University, and Eric Foner, professor emeritus of history at Columbia University and author of *The Second Founding: How Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*, discuss

constitutional changes and challenges throughout our nation's history. ★

Kennedy Library Forums are made possible with generous support from:

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In Case You Missed It ... Watch live-streamed webcasts of *Kennedy Library Forums* at jfklibrary.org/webcast. Videos of all past *Forums* are available for class viewings.

- ★ *Bending Towards Justice* with Senator Doug Jones, William Baxley, former Attorney General of Alabama, and Margaret Burnham, professor at Northeastern University, discuss the decades-long efforts to prosecute the 16th Street Baptist Church bombers.
- ★ Mo Rocca, correspondent for *CBS Sunday Morning* and frequent panelist on NPR's *Wait, Wait...Don't Tell Me!*, discusses his new book, *Mobituaries: Great Lives Worth Reliving*, with Rick Berke, co-founder and executive editor of *STAT* and former reporter and editor at *The New York Times*. ★

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